



PRAYING WITH YOUR CHILDREN AT HOME

Praying with Your Children at Home



Welcome to the first newsletter of the “Praying with Your Children at Home” project. This diocesan project is part of the “Celebrating Family” project set up by the Bishops of England and Wales, with the help of funding from a generous donor, following a consultation of the Catholic Community in a survey called “My Family, My Church”.

If you are a parent, a grandparent, an auntie or uncle, or perhaps a godparent, hopefully you will find something here to interest you.

If you are involved with families in your parish or community in any way you may find something useful here. On the other hand you may be able to provide ideas and inspiration for others. Just get in

touch!

The main aim of the project is to help parents of young children to gain confidence in praying with their sons and daughters.

But what do we mean by prayer?

We may think of prayer as a conversation with God using our own words or traditional or set “prayers” and, of course, this is very important. But if we think of prayer as a relationship with God then all sorts of possibilities for prayer are opened up.

The way we love and care for our children mirrors the way God loves and cares for us.

Think of the things you do for your children everyday—

washing them and their clothes, preparing and eating food with them, teaching them what is right, forgiving them, playing with them.

Think about what they give you—love, joy, frustration, heartache.

This is prayer—the stuff of life. This is where conversation comes from.

Happy Praying!



HOME IS A HOLY PLACE



The Celebrating Family Project launched a three part initiative following the “My Family, My Church” survey. You may have heard of the first part called “Everybody’s Welcome”. The second part which was launched last year is “Home is a Holy

Place”. We are still in this phase which is about helping us to see that, actually, the love we share in our homes, even if at times it isn’t what we hope it might be, reflects God’s love for us. The family is the place where we spend most time trying to live

out what Jesus tells us—care for and attention to the needs of others, comfort, forgiveness—the list goes on! Home is indeed a Holy Place.

This fits in perfectly with the “Praying with Your Children at Home” project.

Dates for your diary:

Meetings for marriage and family life parish reps to find out about “Praying with Your Children at Home”	
St. Paul’s, Nottingham	14th October
Blessed Sacrament, Leicester	19th October
Our Lady of Lincoln, Lincoln	22nd October
Derbyshire	tba

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Calling All Parents

According to an, admittedly small, survey of parents, there is some call for support in praying with their children and also in handing on the faith. The question is what form is this support to take?

Most parents liked the idea of a newsletter or booklet. Some liked the idea of support at sacramental preparation time either within the programme itself or as a separate session. Others preferred to be in a more informal setting.

What are your ideas? Do you agree or do you have other suggestions? Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have. The more ideas, the better!

Because the project is aimed at young children in particular, having some input in a baptism preparation group seemed a good starting point. I am grateful to

Saint Peter and Saint Paul's parish in Lincoln who invited me to attend their course and to present some ideas. Lots of things were learnt from this first venture—the importance of the meeting place, the difficulty of both parents attending due to lack of babysitters or



Baptism - Not just an event but the beginning of a journey in faith

Baptism

different work times, the commitment of parents and of godparents wanting to do the best for their children. There is much to build on.

At the moment I am working with the catechists at St. Georges in Derby in developing a 2 session course with a resource to take away.

If there are any baptism catechists who are interested in this model please get in touch and perhaps we could try it out in a few parishes.

Obviously there is no one way of doing things. What is right for one parish may not be right for another. So we need to be able to tailor the course and the resource to the different circumstances.

Toddler Groups

Some parents like the idea of exploring prayer and handing on faith in a more informal setting. One such setting could be a toddler group.

I know there are parishes with toddler groups out there but I don't know where you all are!

If you run a toddler group or are part of one and think this could be something you would like to be involved in, please

make contact.

Because you have a ready made audience as it were (your children!) you can try out ideas there and then, see how well they work, discard or adapt them if they don't. You can then try them out at home and have a chat about how things went the following week. There might

"...you can try out ideas there and then,..."

be suggestions as to how to use material with older children and how to get the whole family involved. Equally you may not have experienced the welcome you anticipated for your ideas and need

some reassurance and support.

Another idea for where parents of young children gather is before the start of and at the end of nursery school.

Perhaps it would be possible for the school to make available a space for parents to meet and over a cup of tea or coffee look at ways in which to develop their children's faith and at resources that might help them.

Obviously it would be the parents themselves who would be running the

sessions, the school would just provide the premises. If there are any parents who would be interested in seeing something like this happening in their school and the head teacher would be willing to provide space for such a meeting please let me know.

We have to make and take opportunities wherever they arise. So if you have another idea for where parents gather I need to hear from you!

Nurseries



Ideas

This section is to give some ideas about how parents can nurture their child's relationship with God as part of their ordinary, everyday life.

Stories are a great way of spending time with children. They can fire a child's imagination and open up a world of creativity. Well written and illustrated Bible stories are readily available, as are Bibles for babies, toddlers, pre-school children. There are also some wonderful storybooks which amuse and entertain whilst helping us to appreciate people, their differences and talents, the qualities which help us to lead a good life and those that do not. Just take a look in your local Waterstones or Smiths, or visit your local library.

Autumn is a good time for getting outside and marvelling at the beauty and abundance of God's creation—the myriad colours of the leaves (not forgetting the joy of crunching through them and kicking them in the air!), the shiny conkers and other seeds, nuts and berries, the taste of blackberries.



Autumn is also the time for harvest festivals, thanking God for the food we will have over the coming year. Perhaps we could involve our children in cooking some simple seasonal food—a fruit crumble using new season local apples or blackberries we have picked ourselves.

Cafod have their Harvest Fast Day on 2nd October reminding us that not everyone is as fortunate as us. We can talk to our children about the importance of sharing what we have with people who have very little. Perhaps we can have a box which we put coins in on a regular basis for Cafod or another charity of our choice to help us remember that our family is part of a community of families.

Resources

Some suggestions for storybooks:

Sharing a Shell by Julia Donaldson

Tiddler

Room on the Broom

A Squash and a Squeeze, all by Julia Donaldson and Alex Scheffler

Zippity Zebra and the Windy Day by Claire Henley

Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae

and Guy Parker-Rees

Bear Feels Scared by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

Lion Publishers have a really good selection of bibles, bible stories and prayer books for children of all ages. Go to www.lionhudson.com or try www.amazon.co.uk.

Useful websites:

www.everybodyswelcome.org.uk—here you will find hints and tips to help parishes review how welcoming they are.

www.homeisaholyplace.org.uk—from here you can download a pack, view clips from the dvd and find prayers, readings and reflections on family life.

Prayers

Possibly the easiest and most relaxed time to pray with our children, in the traditional sense of the word, is at bedtime after a bedtime story. If we do it everyday it then becomes a “ritual” and children will ask for it if we forget!

We can, of course, make up our own prayers but sometimes it helps to have a few simple prayers to give us confidence. Then, later on, we can introduce our children to more traditional prayers.

“I see the moon;
The moon sees me.
God bless the moon,
And God bless me. Amen”

“Sleep, my child, let peace attend you,
All through the night,
Guardian angels God will send you,
All through the night.”

“God, our Father, I come to say
thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family
and all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night,
and in the morning send
your light.
Amen”





DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM

SUE SANDERSON

077593752

susan.sanderson@nrcdt.org.uk

***Praying with Your Children at
Home Project Worker***



Scunthorpe Deanery Day

Participants checking out the display and resources

**www.nottingham-
diocese.org.uk**

Where Do We Go From Here?

Three ways of involving parents in the “Praying with Your Children at Home” project were proposed earlier, but what if your parish does not have a toddler group or a school nursery and baptism courses run only intermittently? How, then, do we interest and engage parents in this vital work?

You know your own parishes and their capabilities so who better to ask than yourselves!

A while ago each parish was asked to have a named marriage and family life rep. Some have and some haven't. You may even be that person. I would like to invite all reps but equally anyone interested in promoting family life in their parish to a meeting, hopefully, somewhere not too far from where you are! Unfortunately we live in a huge diocese which means that some people will have to travel.

Meetings in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire have been arranged as follows:

Wednesday, 14th October
St Paul's,
Lenton Boulevard,
Nottingham NG7 2BY

Monday, 19th October
The Most Blessed Sacrament,
Gooding Avenue,
Leicester LE3 1JS

Thursday, 22nd October
Our Lady of Lincoln,
Laughton Way,
Lincoln LN2 2HE

All meetings will be from 7.30—9pm

I am looking for a venue in Derbyshire, possibly in the north. If anyone in that area could suggest a parish and promote the meeting I would be very grateful. I want to make it possible for as many interested people to attend throughout the diocese.

I hope that these meetings will be beneficial to all of us. I need your enthusiasm and your ideas. As a starting point I will bring some materials which I am

developing for use with young children. You can tell me what you think of them (no holds barred!). We can then discuss how best to proceed.

I look forward to meeting you and sharing a very fruitful experience.

